



Masks – Frequently Asked Questions

What is the City of Sarasota’s mask requirement?

[City Ordinance 20-5329](#) requires that face coverings be worn in indoor and outdoor public locations and businesses within the City of Sarasota in order to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

In short, if you are inside or outside at a public place in Sarasota and can't physically or socially distance and do not fall within one of the exceptions listed in the ordinance, you need to social distance.

You can read the full text of the ordinance [online at SarasotaFL.gov](#).

Why should I wear a mask?

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), everyone should wear a face covering when they have to go out in public. You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick, and the face cover is meant to protect other people in case you are infected, as well as protect you from others carrying the virus. A cloth mask is recommended for comfort and protection.

Even outdoors?

Yes – unless you are staying 6 feet apart from others, masks are required in outdoor public spaces.

What about at a business?

Face coverings are required indoors whenever you can't physically distance from others. If you work in a business or profession where you don't interact with others, where you can stay at least 6 feet away from others or where a face covering would prevent you from performing your duties, you are exempt.

When is the mask requirement effective?

The ordinance is effective beginning July 1, 2020, and will be in place for 60 days.

Does this apply in Sarasota County?

Masks are required only within the [City of Sarasota boundaries](#) under this ordinance, not unincorporated Sarasota County or other jurisdictions.

Are there other exceptions to the requirement?

Yes. They include:

- Children under the age of 18, as guided by their parents
- Inside schools or daycares, which may have their own rules for face masks

- At non-City government agencies and offices, which may have their own rules for face masks
- Those who are eating or drinking
- Inside your home or residence (masks should be worn in common areas of condos and other multi-family communities)
- Inside a hotel room or other place of lodging (not lobbies or common areas)
- Exercising outdoors while maintaining physical distance from others
- Those traveling in private automobiles

What if I have a medical condition?

If wearing a face covering or mask would be detrimental to your health or aggravate a medical condition, you are not required to wear a mask.

What about the hearing impaired who need to read lips?

The requirement doesn't apply when a hearing-impaired individual needs to see the mouth of someone wearing a face covering in order to communicate.

What kind of mask do I need to wear?

Face coverings recommended by the CDC are acceptable.

How will you enforce it?

City code enforcement staff will initially enforce the ordinance and issue citations only when necessary. However, our primary focus is on educating the public about the requirements and encouraging the use of masks before enforcement. We ask that our citizens, community leaders and businesses help us by encouraging their neighbors and customers to wear face masks.

What are the penalties for not wearing a mask?

A violation of the mask requirement is a civil, non-criminal infraction, which carries a \$50 fine if the violation is uncontested and could result in a penalty of up to \$500 if the violation is contested.

What if I see someone not wearing a mask?

For concerns, questions or more information about masks, email mandatory.mask@sarasotaFL.gov. Your message will be routed to the appropriate department. If you're reporting a code compliance issue, please include an address or location.

What about the homeless?

The City's Homeless Outreach Teams have a supply of face masks available for our unsheltered population, and they have been providing them along with hand sanitizer to homeless individuals throughout the pandemic while conducting outreach.

How do I get a mask?

There are many local businesses and online retailers selling face masks and coverings, as well as individuals and nonprofits in our community creating and providing them for free. If you're still unable to locate a mask or can't afford one, please email mandatory.mask@sarasotaFL.gov with your contact

information to inquire about receiving one for free from the City, while supplies last. To date, the City has already distributed thousands of complimentary face masks to residents, visitors and local businesses.